

Congressman Mike Pence appeared on the *FOX News* program "On The Record with Greta Van Susteren" to discuss health care reform efforts as well as current economic concerns:

Transcript:



GRETA VAN SUSTEREN, FOX NEWS HOST: Where's the money? If health care reform passes, somehow we're going to have to pay for it. Now, the president stands by his campaign pledge taxes will not go up for anyone who makes less than \$250,000 a year. Is that true, or is that fuzzy math?

Joining us live is Republican congressman Mike Pence. Congressman, before we get to the whole business about health care and whether...

REP. MIKE PENCE, R - IN.: Good to be with you, Greta.

VAN SUSTEREN: ... taxes are going up, the big news today, Chicago lost the 2016 Olympics bid to Rio, and after President Obama, his wife and Oprah flew to Copenhagen to make the personal pitch. We're trying to figure out if that's a -- is that a setback or not?

PENCE: Well, you know, it's a disappointment to millions of Americans, experience those of us in the Midwest. We would have loved to have seen the Olympics come to our country in 2016. And it no doubt would have created some jobs down the road. But you know, sadly, it looks like the president's had about as much luck selling the Olympics -- or selling Chicago to the Olympic

Committee as he has selling health care reform to the American people.

You know, I think -- I think, you know, the -- the vision of seeing the President of the United States board Air Force One headed to another glamorous capital around the world on the very day that unemployment rises up to 9.8 percent, another quarter of a million Americans lose their job, I think is a source of frustration to millions of Americans. So we're disappointed about the Olympics, but sure would like to see this president put this economy and American jobs as job one.

VAN SUSTEREN: You talk about the sort of the image, the visual of him going off to try to do the pitch to the Olympics. As an aside, though, the Air Force One is a mini-White House. People -- presidents work on it, and he did have a discussion with Afghanistan. So I take it -- I mean, or let me ask you, are you critical of him making that trip, or do you give him credit for at least trying?

PENCE: Well, look, I just -- look, I -- you know, families are hurting in this country, Greta. The reality is that unemployment continues to rise, rising to 9.8 percent today, more than a quarter of a million Americans more out of work, I think 15 million Americans that are jobless today. We have great debates in this country under way about everything from health care reform to energy policy. I just can't help but feel like this one could have been handled by the first lady just as effectively, could have been handled by other representatives of the United States.

These are challenging times for our nation, and I think the American people would have rather seen this president rolling his sleeves up on a day of such heartbreaking news for working families and been here and figuring out how we can get this economy moving again.

VAN SUSTEREN: All right, well, let me bring you the other question. Taxes for people who make less than \$250,000, will they go up with the health care reform bills that are currently proposed?

PENCE: Well, it's hard to see otherwise. I mean, the House bill, for instance, includes some \$800 billion in new taxes, and \$500 billion of that represents a surcharge on upper-income Americans, but the remainder of those taxes are taxes on small business owners, fees and fines, and -- you know, and that's obviously going to be passed along to working families.

As we follow the debate in the Senate, as well, you're starting to hear that the way they're going to get to the president's pledge that health care reform is not going to add, I think his phrase was, One dime to the deficit, is now to begin to tax all kinds of various procedures that Americans have grown accustomed to being able to receive without the sticky hand of the federal government being involved.

Look, we ought to do health care reform in this country. We ought to do something to lower the cost of health insurance, but we don't need a massive new bureaucracy because if you have this massive new bureaucracy in control, you're going to have taxes on working families and small businesses.

VAN SUSTEREN: We only have 30 seconds left, Congressman, but I'm curious, the use of the word, "surcharge" -- is that just code for tax? I mean, there are certain different ways we can, you know, package it and call these things, but basically, are the American people under \$250,000 a year -- will they have to pay more, no matter what we call it?

PENCE: Look, more than half of the Americans who pay taxes in that upper-income bracket that the Democrats love to point to are actually small businesses owners filing as individuals. Small business is the engine of this economy, and if we're going to start to turn this economy around and start -- and put days like today in the past and start to see unemployment decline and jobs actually created, the last thing we want to do is raise taxes on small business owners in this country. We need to cut taxes for small business owners, working farmers, working families and -- and family farmers, and that's what Republicans are going to continue to fight to do, Greta.

VAN SUSTEREN: Congressman, thank you, sir.

PENCE: Thank you.